

## Culper Day 2020 Caroline Church of Brookhaven

We would like to welcome you to the Caroline Church of Brookhaven, even though we cannot ask you to come in and sit down as in past Culper Days. You are most welcome to walk the grounds at any time, and our services are posted to our website; [www.carolinechurch.net](http://www.carolinechurch.net) . Feel free to follow us on Facebook also.

The congregation began in 1723, and six years later, the present church building was constructed. Originally called Christ Church, the name was changed to honor Queen Caroline who allegedly gifted the church a silver Chalice and Patten together with Altar Linens. During the American Revolution, it was an Anglican Church, but following the war became, and still remains an Episcopal Church. Local Loyalists and British soldiers worshipped here. The cemetery holds the remains of seven Patriot soldiers, and likely some Tories. A musket ball was found in the spire of the Church during some work in 1937, and can be seen in the Church Vestibule. It is probably a relic of the skirmish between Patriot forces and the British encamped in Setauket in August 1777.



42<sup>nd</sup> Royal Highland Regiment of Foot at Caroline Church 2019

An interesting story is that of Dr. George Muirson, a local physician and parishioner. He was an avowed Tory and also a physician on the forefront of combatting the scourge of Smallpox. His loyalty to the Crown cost him his home and profession, as he was forced to leave Setauket post war. His son, Heathcote, did not agree with his Father's loyalty to England and fought bravely for the Patriot cause. In a 1778 letter to Benjamin Franklin, he wrote, *"I early engaged in the service of my Country, (contrary to the express orders of my Father and family, who, have positively refus'd me evry kind of support, so long as I continue in the Rebel service, as they please to term it."*

Wounded at a battle near Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, he was transported back to Rhode Island, where he died in 1781. He is buried in Trinity Church Cemetery, Newport Rhode Island. Dr. Muirson never returned to Setauket, but his wife's stone, located nearby, was returned to Caroline Church in 1974, and can be seen along the main walkway to the Church.



Gravestone of Mary Muirson. Photo by B. Tyler

In 1937, the Melville Family oversaw a restoration of the church back to its Colonial design. The church you see today reflects their generosity and the wonderful work of their Architect, Richard Haviland Smyth. Many of the original construction details were revealed and are visible.



*Barrel ceiling uncovered in 1937. Beams revealed are original 18<sup>th</sup> century white oak*



Caroline Episcopal Church today is an active Parish located overlooking the Village Green in Setauket. We welcome all to join us in continuing our 297 years of worship in our historic church.